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The Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco) is a project aimed at increasing the number of young people going into Higher Education. neaco consists of the University of Cambridge (including its Colleges), Anglia Ruskin University, the University of East Anglia, Norwich University of the Arts, and the University of Suffolk.

Take Your Place is the programme which is being run by neaco in schools and colleges in East Anglia. Information about how your personal information will be used by us in connection with the administration of the Take Your Place programme, and for related purposes, is available at <https://www.takeyourplace.ac.uk/how-we-use-participant-data>.

We will also get in touch by email to facilitate your involvement in the Take Your Place programme. Please contact info@takeyourplace.ac.uk if you have any questions about how we use your data.

Explore your options,
Discover your potential

**TAKE
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PLACE**

A stylized illustration of a hand with a teal sleeve pointing towards the 'TAKE YOUR PLACE' text.

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Explore your options,
Discover your potential

Preparing for a Creative
Writing application

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How can we help?

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- This PowerPoint is here to provide you with in-depth ideas to help and support you with writing a Personal Statement for a creative writing application, beyond the basic tips found online.
- We have put together reading lists, preparation ideas, writing advice and top tips for the application process for a creative course at university.
- We can also help beta-read some of your work!



Why Study Creative Writing?

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From The Complete University Guide: <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/courses/creative-writing/five-reasons-to-study-creative-writing>

1. Story-telling is important

Understanding what makes a story work, how it ticks, and how to get people to care about it, is a genuinely valuable skill.

2. It's... creative

Creative Writing demands you make something from nothing. You'll be making something entirely new, producing something that didn't exist before.

3. Getting to work with published authors

Just like English and History students get to work with published, fully-fledged academics, Creative Writing students get to work with actual authors.

4. Flexibility

The brilliant thing about Creative Writing is that it blends so well with other subjects, be it English, psychology, media, film, drama, and many more.

5. Transferable skills

Pursuing Creative Writing at university will make you a master of language, useful in so many fields. Never underestimate the value of conveying information in an accessible manner.

Where do I start?!

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- Let's start with some reading. We recommend using this time to do some further reading on your chosen subject, as it is important that your personal statement contains an academic paragraph.
- After reading comes practice – use your new-found knowledge to get some top-quality writing done!
- If you can get your writing published somewhere, that will look really good on your application!



An Academic Paragraph

Having an academic paragraph in your personal statement is really important and we suggest using the following reading lists and online courses to help.

Creative writing is not just a creative subject; you will also study literary theory and use this to improve your work! Using theory to reflect on texts (including your own work) is a vital skill.

Reading Suggestions

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Writing Guides

- The Elements of Style by William Strunk Jr and EB White
 - A classic guide to using correct grammar and punctuation; of course you may choose to ignore the rules in your writing, but you need to know 'em to break 'em!
- On Writing: A Memoir by Stephen King
 - A guide to writing well and consistently by the 21st best-selling author in the history of the world – 300 million books sold.
- Wonderbook: The Guide To Creating Imaginative Fiction by Jeff VanderMeer
 - A full-colour, fully-illustrated, super inspirational guide to making things up. Has an accompanying website at www.wonderbooknow.com.
- The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century by Steven Pinker
 - Harvard professor, linguist, popular science writer, and cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker combines theory and humour for intermediate writers looking to improve.
- 1001 Ways to Write Great Fiction, Get Published, and Earn Your Audience by Chuck Wendig
 - Not for the easily offended, New York Times best-selling author Chuck Wendig drops easily-digested mini-tips for aspiring fiction writers.

Course Reading Lists

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Many university courses will publish their reading lists; these are a great place to increase your knowledge. Here's one from De Montfort University:

Julia Bell and Paul Magrs, *The Creative Writing Coursebook* (Macmillan, 2001)

Anne Bernays & Pamela Painter *What If? Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers* (Harper Collins, 1990)

Ailsa Cox, *Writing Short Stories* (Routledge, 2016)

A.L. Kennedy, *On Writing* (Vintage, 2014)

Ursula K Le Guin, *Steering the Craft: A Twenty-first Century Guide to Sailing the Sea of Story* (Mariner, 2015)

Sara Maitland, *The Writer's Way* (Arcturus, 2005)

Nicola Morgan, *Write to be Published* (Snowbooks, 2011)

David Morley, *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Philip D. Roberts, *How Poetry Works* (1986)

Peter Sansom, *Writing Poems* (Bloodaxe, 1994)

Jerome Stern, *Making Shapely Fiction* (Norton, 1991).

Books are inspiration!

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- As are short stories, essays, non-fiction collections, movies, TV shows, popular science books, and even computer games – anything that has been written!
- Re-reading these texts from a writer's point-of-view can be really valuable. Ask yourself:
 - Why is the story structured this way?
 - Why use this point-of-view? Whose story is it?
 - How is the writer using language to influence the reader?
 - What works well that you could try in your own writing?
 - What would you change?
 - Could you write something in a similar style?



Online Courses

- Free online courses from the Open University www.open.edu/openlearn. Courses include:
 - Start Writing Fiction
 - Start Writing Fiction: Characters and Stories
 - What is Good Writing?
 - Writing What You Know
- Udemy – over 500 FREE creative writing courses!
 - www.udemy.com
- Coursera offer a FREE 5-part creative writing specialism (you can pay for a certificate but can access materials for free).
 - <https://www.coursera.org/specializations/creative-writing>
- We also recommend this free course on preparing for university: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/preparing-for-uni>



Get Writing!

Once you have had your fill of theory, get writing! It doesn't have to be big; in fact, flash or micro-fiction lets you practice all the skills a writer needs.

You may be slightly short of inspiration; if so, try:

- Reedsy – a new prompt every week. Currently over 750 prompts!
 - <https://blog.reedsy.com/creative-writing-prompts/>
- Bookfox has 50 ideas to shake your writing, from point-of-view to style.
 - <https://thejohnfox.com/2016/07/creative-writing-ideas-and-prompts/>

Perhaps you need a little guidance:

- this Guardian features 10 famous authors and their top tips.
 - <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jan/03/top-10-writers-tips-on-writing>
- 25 more tips from famous writers:
 - <https://lithub.com/great-advice-from-25-writing-manuals-by-famous-authors/>

Editing



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“So the writer who breeds more words than he needs, is making a chore for the reader who reads.”
— Dr. Seuss

Much of writing is editing; going back through what you have written and making it even better. Here are a few tips:

- Leave a gap before starting, if you can. Coming back to your work later creates distance and lets you read with fresh eyes.
- Re-read critically – what is working, what isn't?
- Start big and get small. There's no point making each sentence sing if you realise you don't need those sentences later on. Start with structure, get your scenes in the right order and your characters' actions consistent and logical, then work down to the sentence level edits.
- Get someone else to read it: someone you trust to be honest, and not too nice or too mean just for the sake of it! Ask more than one person if you can, and remember that you don't have to do as they say – but you should consider it.

If you want someone to read your work, you can send 1,000 words to our Higher Education Champion and published writer, Brian Ennis, at Brian@TakeYourPlace.ac.uk

I have stories – now what?

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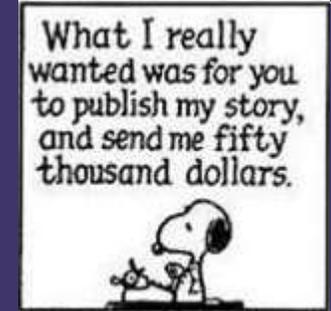
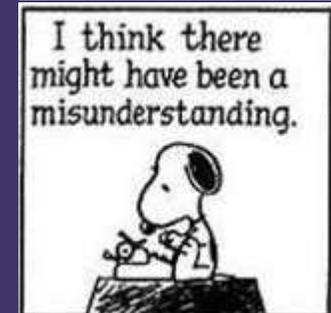
It's time to take the plunge and submit your stories!

You can find listings of markets open to fiction at:

- A meta-list of other databses:
<https://refiction.com/articles/where-to-find-fiction-markets-for-submissions>
- Free browsable list at <https://www.writerswrite.com/guidelines/>
- Duotrope – probably the best listings database, but charges a small monthly fee. www.duotrop.com

Remember to follow the guidelines and don't get discouraged – these 6 writers were repeatedly rejected and went on to sell over 3 BILLION books!

<https://wildmindcreative.com/bookmarketing/6-famous-authors-who-once-faced-rejection>



Organising Your Statement - 4 Paragraph Method

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1. Your reasons for wanting to study the course – future career, skills to develop, etc.



2. Independent research/topic of interest – theories/techniques/analysis of own work.



3. Course-related activities: writing you have done, other relevant skills developed.



4. Extra-curricular activities – pick ones that relate most to the course, show your skills.

Personal Advice from those who made it!

Dan Mason, *Multimedia Journalism* at
Anglia Ruskin University

“Although it may be difficult to return to some sort of routine that you may have been used to while at sixth form or college, I would aim to try and develop skills relevant to the industry you would be looking to go into after year 12 (i.e. if you want to study journalism at university, try to build on writing skills, or techniques such as the inverted pyramid structure for news stories).

While trying to spend time relaxing when possible, you may also try to gain an understanding of what life is like while at Uni by talking to people you know who may have studied at university or join an online student forums, just to get a sense of what studying a degree is like so you can fully prepare for this”.

My HE+

Thinking about applying to University and looking for ways to explore your subject beyond the curriculum? Then this website is for you. Each topic is produced by Cambridge postgraduate students and academics at the cutting edge of research in their field. The topics provide guided activities, questions to think about and suggestions for further reading.



The main subject pages also give you a quick guide to what it would be like to study the subject at university level and suggest some further resources to check out.

<https://www.myheplus.com/>

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